

# Strategic Plan Update

Juvenile Services Education System of MSDE

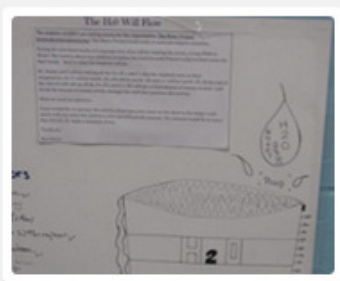
## The Strategic Plan Verification Project Newsletter: October 2016, #5

### Next Steps in UMD Strategic Plan support

Greetings from the Strategic Plan Verification Project Team. We have now completed our second round of visits all of your schools. Thank you all of the principals and teachers that accommodated and facilitated the our student interviews and classroom observations. We have also conducted special education file reviews.



We are now conducting student surveys and school administrators should have been sent links to share with your students. We look forward to receiving and then sharing these results with you.



### H2O will Flow: Extension of Summer Curriculum at LESCC

Students at LESCC took learning beyond the classroom this summer and responded to a fund-raising challenge. All students in JSE read "A Long Walk to Water" by Linda Sue Park as part of the EngageNY summer curriculum. The novel is about two children from Sudan in the desert of Northern Africa who have to walk eight hours a day to fetch water for the family.

Students were affected by this story of lives very different from theirs and, with teachers Rob Morse and Brian Niskey, raised money for the organization called The Water Project ([www.thewaterproject.org](http://www.thewaterproject.org)) that builds wells in underdeveloped countries. The Water Project was started by Salva Dut, a main character from "A Long Walk to Water".

Students named the project "The H2O will Flow". The approximately 20 students raised money by working hard on their assignments and tallying the number of A, B, C's by living unit. Then staff pledged amounts based on the grades: .25 for A, .10 for B and .05 for C's adding up to \$14 per staff member (or staff could make a donation). Teachers kept track of the grades during the time period and divided the amount by the sponsors who signed up. At 20 sponsors for \$14 each that meant approximately 1200 A's on assignments by students and \$250 to The Water Project.

The students also made t-shirts and posters to celebrate their efforts, going beyond the curriculum to fund-raising, advocating and learning about lives and issues different from theirs and as Rob said "I wanted the youth to do something beneficial for somebody else."



## How much is too much staff turnover?

Working with students in confinement is a difficult job. The teaching requires special set of skills and attitudes. The Strategic Plan addresses this issue as one of five main overarching characteristics: Recruitment and Staff, "assembling personnel equipped to create and sustain effective teaching/learning environments for our unique student population is essential to establishing an effective and high-quality secure-care education program." Teacher and staff turnover requires time and effort that stresses the system with HR, training, start-up and staff building. Teacher vacancies cause emergency staffing which leads to problems providing special education and optimal subject area teaching. Systems in transition such as JSE has been over the last 10 years, may experience more than usual turnover, but what is too much and what can be done about it so that students can benefit from stable school environments?

Professional and support staff vacancies in both February and August of 2016 at JSE were 20%. Excluding recently added new positions that are vacant, the percentage of vacancies in September is 16%. The closing of Schaeffer House this past summer may have helped keep the vacancies down during this time period. Particularly troubling is seven professional positions open in February that still remain unfilled and the doubling of the number of support staff positions now vacant (5 in Feb, now 10). Support staff includes Instructional Assistants, Office Clerks, Office Secretaries and Records Secretaries. Another area of concern



is the 21% of Special Education teacher slots open, though half are new positions. There are only 3 school psychologists (Western MD, CYF and BCJJC) all filled at this point, but stretched thin in terms of the needs of Child Find (identifying students with special needs).

A 2015 study suggested that 25% turnover in correctional staff in general is typical and has costs for the system. The study found most turnover occurred in the first 6 months of work in juvenile justice as new staff and that satisfaction with co-workers was a key variable in retention. The authors recommend staff mentoring of new employees to foster co-worker relations. Additional ideas from the 2005 Florida Department of JJ include developing of a coaching model, working with universities to develop juvenile justice education opportunities as part of teacher preparation, and providing of quality, relevant professional development. According to the Strategic Plan: JSE teaching staff should have valid credentials (3.1). This strategy includes an objective of creating a program for mentoring/coaching around issues of best practices, behavior and individualized programming.

Professional Development is also an identified strategy (3.2) such as cooperation with DJS on in-house training and support of conferences and other quality PD. Teacher evaluation (3.3) is important and the program has been developed with the suggestion from principals that some graduated time-table be implemented with new teachers observed more often. Central office systems are being addressed with the hiring of a new HR specialist that will hopefully streamline JSE hiring (3.4). Lastly, an important strategy is the formation of school improvement and leadership teams (3.5 & 3.6) to develop system communication and broad ownership of educational initiatives. If these groups meet regularly and have decision-making authority then this can improve central office and field relations.

References –

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070125-djj-all.pdf>

<http://cjr.sagepub.com/content/36/1/58.abstract>



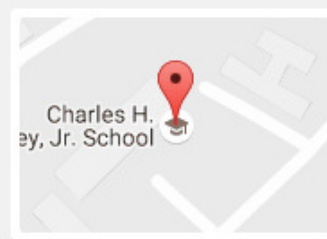
## Poetry Cafe At Hickey

When

Friday, Oct. 14th, 1pm

Where

9700 Old Harford Road Baltimore, MD




[Get Directions](#)


More information


We attended and judged student poetry cafe at Hickey. It was an exciting event for teachers, students, and staff.

# The Strategic Plan Verification Project

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